

REMARKS

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 3, 8, 15-17, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,585,362 to Blease et al (“Blease”). Claim 18 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but the Examiner has indicated that Claim 18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The examiner has allowed Claim 5. Claim 18 has been amended. Claims 1, 3, 15-17, and 19 have been canceled. As a result, claims 5, 8, and 18 are currently pending. The following remarks are considered by applicant to overcome each of the Examiner's outstanding rejections. An early Notice of Allowance is therefore requested.

I. REJECTION OF CLAIM 8 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(A) BASED ON BLEASE

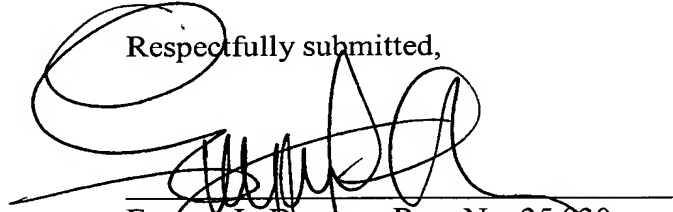
Claim 8 is dependant from independent Claim 5. The Examiner has indicated that Claim 5 is allowable. Office Action (1/9/06), P. 3. As such, Claim 8 must be allowable as well. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that Examiner remove the rejection of Claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,585,362 to Blease et al.

II. REJECTION OF CLAIM 18 AS BEING DEPENDANT UPON A REJECTED BASE CLAIM

The Examiner has rejected Claim 18 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. However, the Examiner has indicated that Claim 18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have amended Claim 18 such that it is now in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that Examiner remove the rejection of Claim 18 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim.

Based upon the above remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application and its early allowance. Should the Examiner feel that a telephone conference with Applicants' attorney would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is urged to contact him at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eugene LeDonne', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized with large loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

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